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Celebrated political and academic leaders to address Georgia Southern Fall 2018 Commencement ceremonies

NOVEMBER 29, 2018

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Georgia Southern University alumni and leaders from the state's highest political office and academic offices will address Georgia Southern's 2018 Fall Commencement graduating class at ceremonies in Statesboro and Savannah on Dec. 7 and 8.

Alumnus and Governor's Chief of Staff Chris Riley will speak to Statesboro Campus graduates



Chris Riley, chief of staff for Gov. Nathan Deal, will address undergraduate and graduate students at the commencement ceremony on Dec. 7 at 1 p.m. at the Allen E. Paulson Stadium in Statesboro.

Riley has worked with Gov. Deal for more than 25 years. As the governor's top advisor, he oversees all aspects of the Governor's Office and state agencies. This role includes working on legislative initiatives, budget negotiations with the General Assembly, approving public messaging and handling issues that arise within state agencies.

His career began at the grassroots level during Deal's 1992 congressional campaign. He worked in Deal's congressional office for 17 years, serving as a project and grants coordinator, campaign manager, deputy chief of staff and chief of staff. In 2009, Riley resigned as chief of staff to manage Deal's gubernatorial campaign. Riley was then appointed as Gov. Deal's chief of staff in January 2011 and served in that capacity until 2014, when he temporarily left to lead Gov. Deal's successful re-election campaign. Following Deal's second inauguration in January 2015, Riley resumed his role as the governor's chief of staff.

A Gainesville native, Riley graduated from Georgia Southern with a B.S. in Justice Studies and garnered the 2013 Alumnus of the Year Award. He and his wife, Bambi, have two sons.

Academic leader and alumna M. Ann Levett to speak to Armstrong and Liberty campus graduates



Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools (SCCPSS) Superintendent M. Ann Levett, Ed.D., will speak to Armstrong and Liberty campus undergraduate and graduate students at commencement on Dec. 8 at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m, respectively, at the Armstrong Sports Center in Savannah.

Levett, a Savannah native, was appointed as SCCPSS Superintendent in June 2017, following roles as deputy superintendent and chief academic officer.

She launched her career in the local school district, serving in numerous SCCPSS positions for more than 20 years, before accepting roles as dean of the School of Education at Middle Georgia State College and executive director of Yale University School of Medicine's School Development Program (SDP). Levett pioneered SDP school reform efforts across the U.S., Ireland, England, The Netherlands and France, designing and delivering a holistic approach to pre-K-12 education that addressed the direct needs of students and parents.

Upon returning to Georgia, Levett was appointed by Governors Sonny Perdue and Nathan Deal to two positions on state education boards. She has also served as a national review panelist for the U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Schools program for more than 12 years.

Levett earned a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Georgia, and an M.Ed. in Special Education, MPA and Ed.S. in Educational Leadership from Georgia Southern. She has a B.S. in Speech and Language Pathology from Armstrong State College, where she was inducted as a Notable Alumni member. In addition to her formal studies, Levett has participated in leadership development programs at Harvard University, Yale University, Vanderbilt University, University of Delaware, University of California San Diego and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

She is a mother of two adult daughters and two grandchildren.

The 2018 Fall Commencement ceremonies will be available as live webcasts at www.facebook.com/GeorgiaSouthern or GeorgiaSouthern.edu/commencement.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving nearly 26,500 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.